

**Submission
No 141**

MEASURES TO PROHIBIT SLOGANS THAT INCITE HATRED

Organisation: ActionAid Australia

Date Received: 15 January 2026

14 January 2026

Mr Edmond Atalla, MP
Chair, Legislative Assembly Committee on Law and Safety
Parliament of New South Wales

Dear Mr Atalla,

I am writing on behalf of ActionAid Australia in response to the Legislative Assembly Committee on Law and Safety Inquiry into Measures to prohibit slogans that incite hatred.

ActionAid is a global women's rights organisation, working with women on the frontlines of injustice – including the climate crisis, conflicts, and humanitarian emergencies. We work with more than 41 million people living in over 70 countries, supporting women to transform their lives and communities.

ActionAid is deeply concerned by proposals from the New South Wales Government to ban political language, including phrases such as “globalise the intifada” and “from the river to the sea” in wake of the horrific Bondi terror attacks.

The criminalisation of political language associated with challenging genocide in Gaza and the illegal occupation of Palestine risks undermining the right to protest and the implied freedom of political communication as well as weakening democratic participation in NSW. This would disproportionately impact on Palestinian communities and justice advocates across the state.

Treating slogans like “globalise the intifada” and “from the river to the sea” as “inherently hateful” and posing a threat to community safety is not backed by evidence. These slogans have contested meanings and are used in different ways depending on context, including to express political opposition, solidarity and calls for justice in the context of peaceful protests.

Banning these slogans would place significant limitations on freedom of speech and political communication by removing the need to consider intent or actual harm. This is likely to deepen division and mistrust rather than promote social cohesion. Political disagreement or offence should not be treated as criminal conduct.

ActionAid strongly supports protecting all communities from hatred, intimidation and violence. However, NSW already has criminal laws that address incitement to violence, threats and harassment. These laws focus on harmful conduct and provide appropriate safeguards. In this context, new legislation that bans political slogans such as “globalise the intifada” and “From the River to the Sea” is unnecessary.

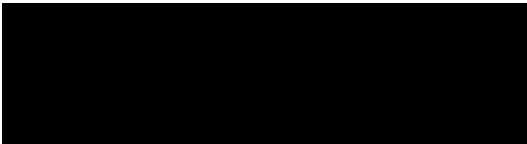
We urge the NSW Government to consider more effective and evidence-based approaches to responding to rising antisemitism, racism and Islamophobia such as education, dialogue, and anti-racism initiatives, alongside the use of existing criminal law.

We recommend to the Committee that:

1. No additional political slogans or symbols be banned or criminalised, including those associated with Palestinian advocacy.
2. Any proposed bans on specific slogans, including “globalise the intifada” or “From the River to the Sea” or “From the River to the Sea, Palestine will be Free” be abandoned.
3. Palestinian symbols, slogans and expressions of solidarity be explicitly recognised as protected political communication, not hate speech.

4. Legislation and guidance clearly distinguish between universally recognised hate symbols and political expression opposing occupation, apartheid or state violence.
5. Existing criminal law continues to address genuine threats of violence or intimidation without expanding into content-based regulation of political speech.
6. Protest rights and political expression be clearly protected within NSW criminal and public order law in line with Australia's human rights obligations.
7. NSW Government acknowledges and rejects the racial discrimination inherent in selectively policing Palestinian political expression.
8. NSW Government ensures any guidance to police and public authorities is content-neutral, evidence-based, and designed to prevent discriminatory enforcement against Palestinians and those advocating Palestinian rights.
9. Community education and dialogue initiatives be prioritised over broad prohibitions or expanded police powers.

Kind regards,



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